



Andrée Jeanne Rosenfeld
(1934–2008)

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Andrée Rosenfeld was a highly regarded intellectual, influential and inspirational in so many spheres of science and archaeology. She touched the lives of many – friends, colleagues and students – in Britain, Europe, America and Melanesia, as well as in Australia. This reflects not only the rare breadth of the expertise she commanded but its expression in her research and writing. It also reflects her personal qualities. To both relationships and to her intellectual life she brought humanity, empathy and integrity. Her teaching and supervision were inspirational, significant also for her example of sensitive professional practice.

We first met in 1968 when she was on the curatorial staff of the British Museum and I was on study leave in Britain. I sought her advice on the technical aspects of microscopic study of use-wear traces on ancient stone artefacts. She was already an acknowledged European expert in archaeological science, also developing significant research on Palaeolithic cave art. In the early 1970s, we both joined John Mulvaney's newly established Department at the Australian National University. She was a valued colleague, regarded with deep admiration and affection.

Andrée's childhood years were spent in a Europe fractured by the social impacts of impending, and then actual, conflict and invasion. When she was born in Liège, Belgium, her father, Léon Rosenfeld, had held the Chair of Physics at its University for several years. He was already an eminent figure among European researchers in the developing fields of physics in pre-war Europe. His work in the interpretation of quantum mechanics, in what is known as the Copenhagen Interpretation, was renowned. He was a close collaborator with Niels Bohr over many years, and one of the founders of the journal *Nuclear Physics*. Though a leading research expert, he was also concerned with the wider contexts of his discipline, especially the roles science might play in society. What contributions could it make to resolving social questions?

These philosophical concerns remained a feature of his intellectual life throughout his career.¹

Andrée's mother, Yvonne Rosenfeld, was also a dedicated scientist, one of the few women of her time to undertake doctoral research in physics. So Andrée and her younger brother, Jean, grew up in a household driven by scientific scholarship. Both followed the family tradition of scientific achievement. But Andrée incorporated her science into a life devoted to interpreting the archaeological evidence of the material cultures and artistic creations of hunter-gatherer societies.

In 1940 Léon Rosenfeld accepted the Chair of Physics at Utrecht University. The family then moved from Liège to Holland. The years of German occupation of that country brought times of great tension and anxiety for them. This was accepted with courage. However, in post-war years Léon was appointed to a chair at Manchester University and in 1947 the family moved to England. So Andrée undertook her studies in physics at Bristol University (BSc 1956).

During her student days in Britain's west country Andrée took up caving. This became more than recreation. She developed a scientific interest in the caves' geological history and the formation of cave sediments.

So when Andrée was considering postgraduate research she did not opt for a topic in the field of theoretical physics. Instead she proposed combining her science and her new-found interest in caves in archaeological research focused on Pleistocene cave sites. For this she joined the newly established Department of Environmental Archaeology at University College, London, headed by Professor Frederick Zeuner.

In the course of this doctoral project Andrée developed outstanding technical skills in interpreting cave stratigraphy, and in analysing cave sediments. She undertook excavation of Palaeolithic cave sites in Devon, Torbryan and Three Holes Cave. One member of her excavation team was Australian Ian Crawford, one of John Mulvaney's Melbourne graduates, then doing postgraduate courses in London. He returned to an appointment in the Western Australian Museum, to initiate that state's first archaeological programmes, some specifically directed to rock-art recording.

On completion of her doctorate (1960) Andrée continued in the Department for some years as Zeuner's research assistant. At this time she may have felt some frustration; that this particular research emphasised technical analysis at the expense of interpretive challenge. However, the skills honed in those years were to be vitally important in her later fieldwork and teaching in Australia. They also led to her first book *The Inorganic Raw Materials of Antiquity* (1965), an impressive survey and valuable textbook. In 1964 she joined the staff of the British Museum with curatorial responsibilities for the Palaeolithic collections. This position she held until 1972, the

1 G.E. Brown, 'Léon Rosenfeld: 14 August 1904 – 23 March 1974', *Nuclear Physics B* 83 (1), December 1974: i-viii; Anja Skaar Jacobsen, 'Léon Rosenfeld's Marxist defense of complementarity', *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 17, Supplement (2007), 13–34.

time of the move to Australia on Peter Ucko's appointment to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

The years at the British Museum were seminal for her intellectual engagement with archaeology, especially the material culture and art of the Palaeolithic societies of Western Europe. She began research on the museum's collection of Magdalenian engraved plaques and small sculptures, expanding this with comparative work on collections in European museums.²

The opportunity to work in the field with Leroi-Gourhan excavating the Palaeolithic site at Arcy-sur-Curé was an important experience. Leroi-Gourhan was not only developing new approaches to excavating such sites but also new and revolutionary interpretive studies of the cave art based on his meticulous recording.

In London, Andrée was a vital link between the British Museum and the University. She gave visiting lectures, on material culture and Palaeolithic art. These are still remembered as inspirational by anthropologists and art scholars Howard Morphy and Robert Layton. With Peter Ucko, then lecturer in Anthropology at University College, she engaged in an important research project on the European Palaeolithic cave art. Its aim was an objective assessment of the content and context of the images, and how this might lead to new understanding of the reasons for their creation. In 1967 they published their results in the book *Palaeolithic Cave Art* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967). It was envisaged as a university text. Yet it was also a seminal work in its comprehensive discussion and the incisive critiques of both approaches to recording and the interpretive theories invoked in explanation of the images over the century since the painted and engraved caves first became objects of serious study. This small book remains an extraordinarily stimulating text. It certainly inspired a new vitality in the lectures I gave to my Prehistory students on this topic in the late 1960s.

As well as many visits to European sites at that time Andrée also travelled to Nigeria to work with Ekpo Eyo, former student at the Institute of Archaeology. There she undertook the analysis of the microlithic industries from the Rop Rock Shelter, publishing her results in the *West African Journal of Archaeology* (1972, 2: 17–28).

In 1972 there came the move to Australia when Peter Ucko was appointed Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra. Established in Canberra, Andrée soon joined John Mulvaney's team in the newly established Department of Prehistory and Anthropology at the Australian National University. She brought to this position rare skills and unusual breadth of scholarship. In it she combined teaching and research in brilliant synergy to create a new field of art and material cultural studies within the discipline of Australian archaeology.

² See Andrée Rosenfeld, 'Profile figures: schematisation of the human figure in the Magdalenian culture of Europe', in *Form in Indigenous art*, ed. by Peter Ucko, (Canberra: AIAS, 1977), pp. 90–109.

By 1976 she had established a course in the Archaeology of Art and already completed her first excavation in Australia – of the Early Man rock shelter near Laura on Cape York. Before beginning the excavation, she completed the recording of a number of engraved and painted shelters in the area, so her detailed examination would have localised context.

In the study of the engravings of the Early Man shelter and examination of its stratified deposits her own field experience and special skills were deployed in a field study of rare quality. Specialist experts were involved in the fieldwork where relevant. The examination of this site remains a model for both methodology and the presentation of results. Her analysis of the site's engravings distinguished two phases. These could be related to the stratified cultural sequence and its radiocarbon dates. So she identified the first clearly dated Australian example of rock engraving in a Pleistocene context.³

In researching the engraved or painted images on rock surfaces she had rare command of both the traditions of stylistic analysis and the demands of meticulous recording, while not ignoring the ethnographic evidence available from the traditions of local custodians where this could be shared with the recorder. In this research she positioned the images within the wider cultural contexts from the past, to be analysed as intrinsic to the archaeology. The anthropology of present manifestations was respected and treated with sensitivity for its roles and significance in a living culture.

In research she explored new approaches with scientific rigour and was theoretically astute. Her field investigations were meticulous, informed by a scientific concern for objectivity and her regard for evidence as the basis of explanation. She also encouraged others to be equally rigorous, and equally adventurous in such studies. As a teacher at the ANU, and as a mentor to many scholars from other institutions, she encouraged and inspired a generation of researchers, now leaders in their field.

Beyond the university her advice on site assessment and conservation problems was highly regarded. For the Australian Heritage Commission she prepared a book on the conservation of rock-art sites to guide the heritage professionals in state agencies and National Parks' services responsible for site protection and management. It is still valued as an important manual.⁴ At conferences and meetings she presented clearly argued papers of significance and convened symposia, for example at the international AURA Congress held in Darwin in 1988.⁵

Andrée's standing was international. She held visiting Fellowships at the Getty Institute in Los Angeles in 1988, and at Oxford University in 1989. Less formal, but

3 A. Rosenfeld, David Horton and John Winter, *Early Man in North Queensland, Terra Australis* 6, (Canberra: Department of Prehistory, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1981); A. Rosenfeld, 'Style and meaning in Laura art: A case study in the formal analysis of style in prehistoric art', *Mankind* 13 (3) (1982), 199–217.

4 *Rock Art Conservation in Australia*, (Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1988).

5 See P. Bahn and A. Rosenfeld (eds), *Rock Art and Prehistory* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1991).

still indicative of her significant work, was the invitation to join the gathering of world experts on the Palaeolithic and its art hosted by best-selling author Jean Aul (*Clan of the Cave Bear*) at her home in Oregon in 1993.

In all her research she gave consideration to the ethical obligations of archaeological research, being especially sensitive to the custodial concerns of indigenous communities. This is clearly demonstrated in the way she presented the results of her work with Winifred Mumford on the engraved surfaces of Thuiparta at Erowalle (Wallace Rock Hole in the James Range of Central Australia). This study was undertaken to assist the local community in its site management and presentation of the place to visitors. The brief published report respects that community's wishes that it should present only short descriptions of the engraved surfaces, without discussing their meanings or values known to the community. No photographs of the engravings were to be included. The full recordings were given to the community for whom the locality and its engravings held great significance.⁶

Such respect for the present custodians of cultural heritage informed her work throughout her career. In the 1980s, she undertook important excavations in New Ireland as part of Professor Allen's Lapita Homeland Project focused on the Bismarck Archipelago. Professor Golson, who also worked on New Ireland at that time, praises the archaeological quality of her fieldwork, which produced significant results documenting a 30,000-year-old occupation.⁷

Above all, remembering this fieldwork, Golson stresses her empathy with the local villagers and her respect for their traditional beliefs. In a later year she made a personal return visit to Banaxalaxan village, especially to renew her friendship with them, and inform them of the excavation's findings. At the memorial meeting held for Andrée at the ANU in March 2009, Professor Golson spoke of this visit:

Going back to stay was her way of showing her appreciation to the community and the culture she had entered as a stranger and become accepted as a friend.

In 1992 Andrée and I were invited to present papers on Australian rock art at an international conference on Aegean Bronze Age Iconography, focusing on issues of methodology. This was held in Hobart, warmly hosted by local classicists. Perhaps the overseas visitors expected from our presentations a visual display of Australia's spectacular rock art. We may have disappointed them in our approaches firmly directed to the analytical issues of the meeting.

Andrée's discussion of recent trends in Australian rock art studies was a masterly survey. It demonstrated the melding of archaeological and anthropological practice and theory that informed current research. For Andrée there must have been a curious

⁶ See Andrée Rosenfeld and Winifred Mumford, 'The Thuiparta rock engravings at Erowalle, Wallace Rock Hole, James Range, Northern Territory', *Tempus* 6 (1996), 247–255.

⁷ See her report on the Buang Merabak excavations in P. Bellwood and D. Tillotson (eds) *Indo-Pacific Prehistory: The Chiang Mai Papers*. *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association* 16 (1999), 213–224.

resonance in the fact that the fine publication following the conference came from the University of Liège, from the city of her earliest childhood and the university in which Léon Rosenfeld held his first chair.

The conclusion to her lecture illustrates the intellectual qualities of her work and why it inspired so many young researchers. I should like to quote this passage in full:

The last decade of rock art studies in Australia has seen a diversity of approaches, increasingly focusing on the informational role of art in mediating social relations. In the process of developing (sic) models for the integration of rock art studies into the broader sphere of Australian prehistory, archaeologists are being forced to return to a more fine-grained examination of the very nature of the material we deal with. In its journey from the esoteric illustrations of myth through abstracted artefactual product, to an active component of social adaptation, the study of rock art has led us increasingly into the realm of the social theory of style and of image creation and image perception as a dynamic social process. The special nature of rock art as indelibly marking the landscape further enables it to lead us back into the cultural geographics imposed on natural environments that play an important role in directing the adaptive choices open to hunter-gatherer societies.⁸

On retirement Andrée moved to Rathdowney in Queensland to design and build her own house and garden on land surrounded by the beauty of Mount Maroon and the Border Ranges. She remained an active researcher, affiliated with two universities and publishing a number of powerful and elegant papers. She was also dutiful in attending the Academy's annual symposia, welcoming the opportunity to renew academic connections. But Rathdowney was important in giving her the opportunity to develop her already established skills in textile design and weaving. The small community included a number who shared these interests. She encouraged them, joining in regular craft days and arranging exhibitions of their work. In this she formed new, significant friendships. So the years at Rathdowney were important and creative, also happy, as shared with her much loved animals – dogs, cats, and the donkeys saved from neglect. It is tragic that this life was cut short by serious illness in 2008. The loss is great to scholarship, but especially for those to whom Andrée was so very dear, and to whom she was linked by lifelong friendship.

She will ever be remembered for the warmth of her friendship; her joy in the beauty of artistic creation and of the natural world; her compassionate understanding of others and her integrity grounded in calm inner strength. She lived with grace and elegance, also with courage. For all of us she will remain a gracious, abiding presence.

Isabel McBryde

8 Andrée Rosenfeld, 'Recent developments in Australian rock art studies', in EIKON: *Aegean Bronze Age Iconography: Shaping a Methodology*, ed. by R. Laffineur and J.K. Crowley. 4th International Aegean Conference, University of Liège, Liège (1992), p. 237.

Acknowledgements

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